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AREA 88

by KAORU SHINTANI

21

What Could Kanzaki Be Plotting Now? And Why Is He Visiting the Estate Of a Skilled Hit Man?

Mission 21:
COUNTDOWN to INTRIGUE

ROME
TEN PM

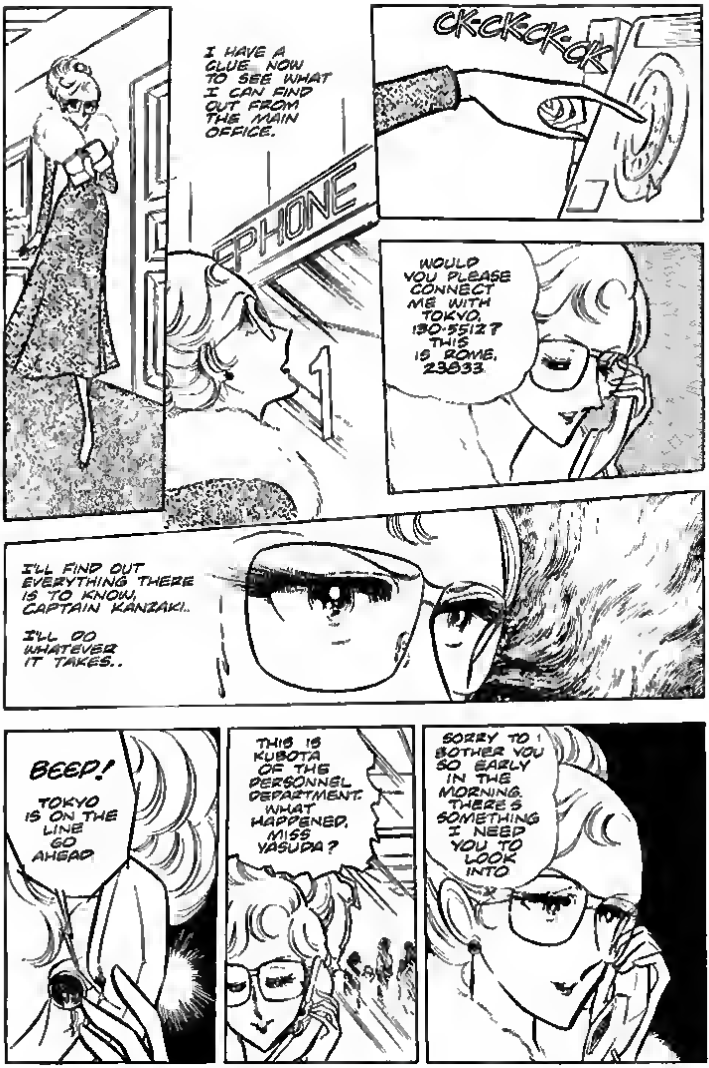
THERE'S NO DOUBT--
MY ACTIONS SINCE I SAW SHIN'S PHOTO IN THAT MAGAZINE HAVEN'T BEEN NORMAL...
THE WORLD
BUT... I COULDN'T SIT STILL...
I MUST BE CRAZY..

NOW. WHAT WAS IT YOU WANTED TO TALK ABOUT?
I'LL GET RIGHT TO THE POINT.
WAS THERE ANY COMMUNICATION WITH THE PILOT OF THAT MILITARY PLANE?
MISS YASUDA!
WELL?! YES OR NO?!

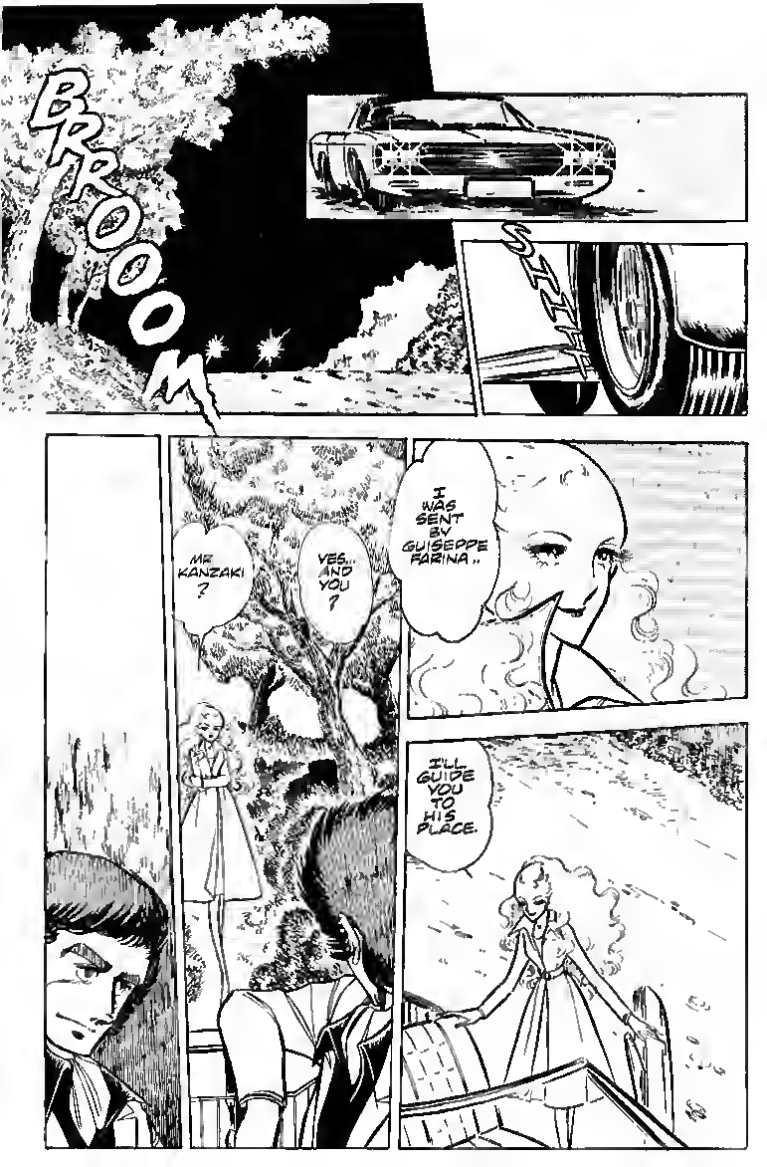
ha, ha, ha-- NO COMMUNICATION AT ALL! HE FIRED AT US OUT OF THE BLUE
DON'T LIE TO ME!
.....
THIS IS A REPORT OF AN INVESTIGATION INTO YOUR PRIVATE LIFE.
SIX MONTHS AGO, YOU BOUGHT A CONDO IN THE SUBURBS OF FRANKFURT, WEST GERMANY.. CORRECT?
I DON'T CARE WHAT KIND OF WOMAN IS LIVING THERE, IT'S THE PRICE OF THE CONDO THAT CONCERNS ME
AS A CO-PILOT FOR OUR AIRLINE, THERE'S NO WAY YOUR SALARY COULD HAVE ALLOWED YOU TO PAY A THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLAR MORTGAGE
I BOUGHT IT BY BORROWING MONEY FROM MY FRIENDS.
DON'T TRIFLE WITH ME! I LEARNED ALL ABOUT YOUR FRIENDS IN THE FIRST STAGE OF THE INVESTIGATION!
HOW DID YOU MAKE THE MONEY?!

W-WELL..
OUR AIRLINE'S PARTS WAREHOUSE IN EUROPE IS AT FRANKFURT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT.
SINCE YOU'VE STARTED WORKING THE INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS THREE YEARS AGO.
IT SEEMS THAT OUR WAREHOUSE HAS BEEN PROVIDING PARTS TO OTHER AIRLINES AS WELL
SECRETLY!
IT WOULD BE SO EASY TO EXPOSE YOU..
WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE FIRED? TO STAY IN JAIL FOR A WHILE?
P-PLEASE, I BEG YOU.. I WON'T DO IT AGAIN! . PLEASE, LET ME STAY
I'LL DO WHATEVER YOU WANT!
WAS THERE ANY COMMUNICATION WITH THE PILOT OF THE MILITARY PLANE?!
Y-YES THERE WAS

HIS VOICE CAME OVER THE RECEIVER I HEARD HIM CALL OUT CAPTAIN KANZAKI'S NAME.
AND THEN ?!
THEN CAPTAIN KANZAKI SAID "STOP! RYOKO'S ON THIS PLANE!"
IT'S TRUE ! I SWEAR !
I SEE... THAT'S ALL I NEEDED TO HEAR FROM YOU... THANKS.
MISS YASUDA... CAPTAIN KANZAKI TOLD ME NOT TO TELL THIS TO ANYONE... PLEASE KEEP IT BETWEEN OURSELVES...
ALL RIGHT!
WELL... I SUGGEST YOU KEEP YOUR WEST GERMAN ACTIVITIES WITHIN BOUNDS
IF YOU GO ANY FURTHER, I MAY NOT BE THE ONLY ONE INVESTIGATING YOUR... MOONLIGHTING.


I HAVE A CLUE. NOW TO SEE WHAT I CAN FIND OUT FROM THE MAIN OFFICE.
CK-CK-CK-CK
PHONE
WOULD YOU PLEASE CONNECT ME WITH TOKYO, 130-5512? THIS IS ROME, 23833.
I'LL FIND OUT EVERYTHING THERE IS TO KNOW, CAPTAIN KANZAKI.
I'LL DO WHATEVER IT TAKES..
BEEP!
TOKYO IS ON THE LINE GO AHEAD.
THIS IS KUBOTA OF THE PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT. WHAT HAPPENED, MISS YASUDA?
SORRY TO BOTHER YOU SO EARLY IN THE MORNING. THERE'S SOMETHING I NEED YOU TO LOOK INTO

CAPTAIN KANZAKI WHO IS CURRENTLY IN CHARGE OF INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS TO EUROPE...
AND SHIN KAZAMA, WHO VOLUNTARILY RESIGNED FROM OUR AIRLINE A YEAR AGO...
COULD YOU PLEASE GET TOGETHER ALL THE DATA ON THEM FOR ME? AS FAR BACK AS POSSIBLE.
TELEPHO
YES IT'S BEST THAT YOU GO BACK AS FAR AS THEIR BIRTHS...
AND PLEASE CALL MR. HOSOYAMA, THE HEAD OF THE INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT, AND ASK HIM TO RESEARCH ALL THE STOCKHOLDERS OF OUR AIRLINE.
YES... AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
WELL... I WILL BE IN GENEVA THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW.
SO PLEASE SEND THIS BY TELEX TO OUR GENEVA OFFICE... YES...
GWAK
NOW COMES THE WAITING...
IF MY INTUITION IS RIGHT... THIS IS GOING TO BE A SERIOUS AFFAIR...


BRROOM
SCREECH
I WAS SENT BY GUISEPPE FARINA..
YES.. AND YOU ?
MR KANZAKI ?
I'LL GUIDE YOU TO HIS PLACE.

BURROOOM
.....
YOU'RE VERY QUIET. ITALIAN MEN ARE MUCH MORE TALKATIVE AND OUTGOING.
IT'S BAD LUCK TO SAY UNNECESSARY THINGS.
PLEASE TURN RIGHT AT THE NEXT CORNER
WE ARE NOW IN MR FARINA'S ESTATE.
.....

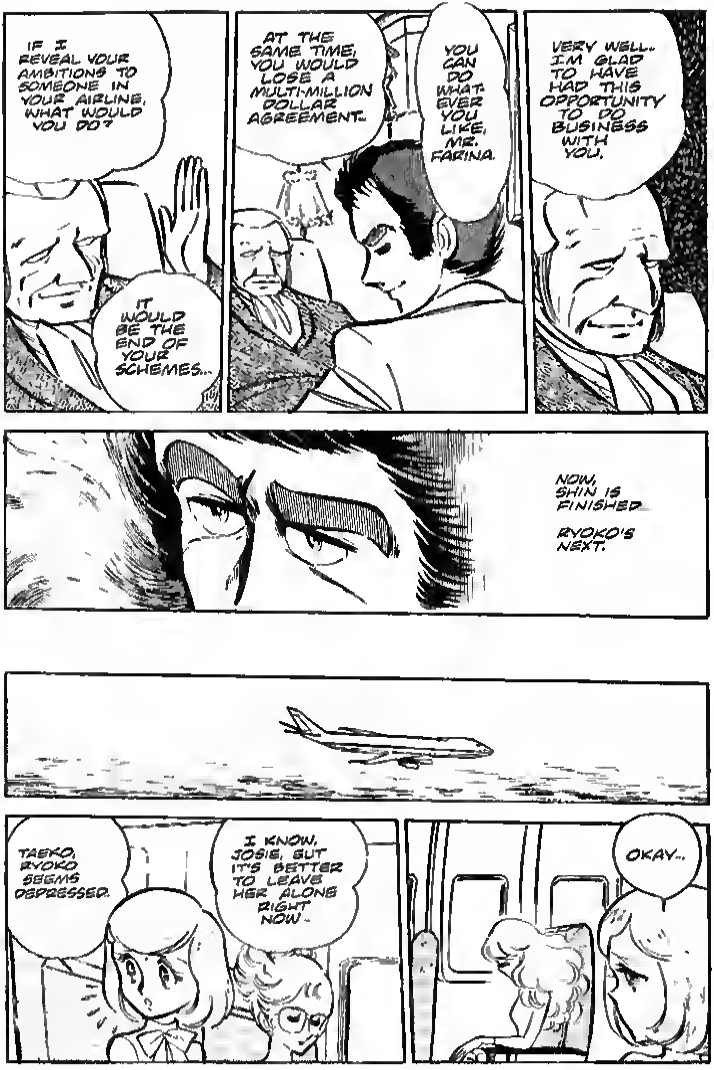
STOP HERE.
FLASH THE LIGHTS TWICE.
PLEASE DRIVE IN
.....
CREEE
OOOOOOOOOO

PLEASE, MR KANZAKI, MAKE YOURSELF COMPORTABLE. MR FARINA WILL BE ABLE TO SEE YOU IN A MOMENT
EXCUSE ME
THIS IS A HUGE MANSION. IT MUST BE A REMODELED MEDIEVAL CASTLE.
AT ANY RATE, THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ANYONE HERE.
!!

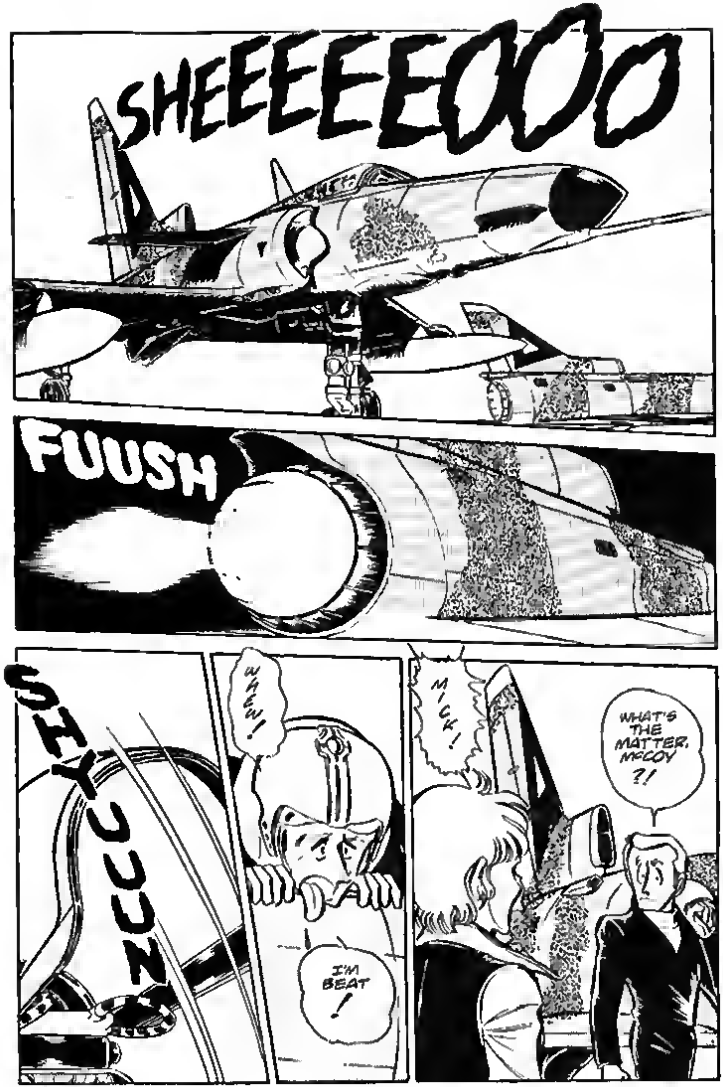
WELCOME, MR KANZAKI.
I AM GUISEPPE FARINA.
AS YOU SEE, I HAVE A PROBLEM WITH MY LEGS... PLEASE FORGIVE THE SOUND OF THE WHEELCHAIR...
JULIANA, PLEASE BRING SOME DRINKS.
YES, SIR.
WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE? VINTAGE WINE OR PERHAPS A GLASS OF SCOTCH? I HAVE ANYTHING YOU MIGHT WANT JUST SAY THE WORD
I NEVER DRINK BEFORE BUSINESS DEALINGS.
I SEE YOU'RE A STRAIGHT MAN

BUT DESPITE YOUR STRAIGHTNESS, YOU WANT ME TO HAVE SOMEONE KILLED.
WHY?
THERE ARE TWO REASONS... FIRST, I HAVE NO TRAINING IN THESE MATTERS.
AND SECOND, I DON'T WANT THIS MAN'S BLOOD ON MY HANDS.
GOOD! YOU'RE AN HONEST MAN.
YOU ARE ALSO MORE LIKELY TO BE SUCCESSFUL HIRING A PROFESSIONAL FOR THE TASK...
SO...WHO IS IT YOU WANT TO KILL? A MAN OR A WOMAN? AND WHERE IS THIS PERSON AND WHAT DO THEY DO?
THE TARGET IS A MAN. HIS NAME IS SHIN KAZAMA. HE'S JAPANESE.
HE'S AT AN AIR FORCE BASE IN THE ASRAN KINGDOM CALLED AREA 88.
HE'S A PILOT IN THEIR MERCENARY AIR FORCE

THEN, WHAT DO YOU OFFER IN REMUNERATION?
I WILL PURCHASE ALL THE AIRPLANE PARTS YAMATO AIRLINES USES IN EUROPE FROM YOUR SUBSIDIARY COMPANY! YOU KNOW THE VALUE OF SUCH A LARGE ACCOUNT...
HOW ABOUT IT?
WHERE DOES A MERE CAPTAIN OF INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS GET THE POWER TO SUPPORT SUCH A DEAL?
TWENTY FIVE PERCENT OF YAMATO AIRLINE'S STOCK NOW RESTS IN MY HANDS
AND IT'S EASY TO CHANGE AN AGENT OR TWO
NO ONE WILL SUSPECT
AS LONG AS WE'RE CHARGED ORDINARY MARKET PRICES.
HOW CAN YOU GUARANTEE THIS?
ASK MAXWELL INTERNATIONAL IN THE U.S.A
AHH.-WHAT A SURPRISE I NEVER IMAGINED THAT YAMATO AIRLINES COULD HAVE SUCH A BIG PARASITE IN ITS BELLY.
.....


IF I REVEAL YOUR AMBITIONS TO SOMEONE IN YOUR AIRLINE, WHAT WOULD YOU DO?
IT WOULD BE THE END OF YOUR SCHEMES...
AT THE SAME TIME, YOU WOULD LOSE A MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR AGREEMENT.
YOU CAN DO WHATEVER YOU LIKE, MR. FARINA.
VERY WELL. I'M GLAD TO HAVE HAD THIS OPPORTUNITY TO DO BUSINESS WITH YOU.
NOW, SHIN IS FINISHED.
RYOKO'S NEXT.
TAEKO, RYOKO SEEMS DEPRESSED.
I KNOW, JOSIE, BUT IT'S BETTER TO LEAVE HER ALONE RIGHT NOW.
OKAY...

TAEKO... HOW CAN I BECOME A FINE LADY LIKE YOU?
UH... YOU SHOULD EAT WELL... SLEEP WELL... AND PLAY WELL...
AND ONCE IN A WHILE YOU SHOULD THINK ABOUT YOUR LIFE SERIOUSLY
THE ONLY THING I SERIOUSLY THINK ABOUT IS WHETHER A PRINCE WILL REALLY COME AND TAKE ME AWAY...
OH... JOSIE... THAT'S FINE.
AS FOR ME, I WORRY THAT MY PRINCE HAS PASSED ME BY...
?!
OH I WISH I WERE YOUNGER!
VEEEOOOO
WWWWWW


SHEEEEEOOO
FUUSH
WHEW!
I'M BEAT!
SHIVVVVV
MACK!
WHAT'S THE MATTER, McCOY?!

WHAT'S HAPPENED TO SHIN ?!
I DONT KNOW IT'S BEEN THREE DAYS SINCE HE WAS LOCKED UP IN THE STOCKADE
.....
Knzki thr sint..
HOW IS SHIN... ?
COM-MONDER SAKI-
HE SEEMS TO BE MUMBLING SOMETHING..
BUT AT LEAST HE'S STOPPED BEING SO VIOLENT..

I WANT TO TALK TO HIM.. LET ME IN.
BUT.. COMMANDER..
BREEK
HOW ARE YOU..? HAVE YOU COOLED DOWN A BIT YET?
.....
SHIN, I WANT YOU TO TELL ME WHY YOU SHOT AT THAT CIVILIAN PLANE..
CLANK

AAHHHHH!!!
SHOOM
CHAKK
COMMANDER!
HALT!
WAIT! DON'T SHOOT! DON'T SHOOT HIM!
COMMANDER, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!

HEY, SHIN! DID THEY LET YOU OUT?
WHAT?!
MICK, STOP HIM! HE'S GONE MAD!
HEY! WAIT, SHIN!
UH... UH, UH!!
SHIN!

GYAAHH!!
WHOOOSH
YEOW!
WHUDD
SORRY, SHIN...
I DIDN'T WANT TO HURT YOU...
A-GUH...
WHAT?!
GOING HOME...
IM GOING BACK.. HOME...
WHUMP

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT ?
YOU'RE BLEEDING A LOT...
I DON'T KNOW. HE JUST JUMPED UP AND ATTACKED ME...
SAKI, WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED ?!
WE STOPPED HIM, SOMEHOW.
CARRY HIM TO HIS CELL AND GET THE MILITARY DOCTOR.
YES, SIR!
SAKI ! HEY, SAKI !
WHAT'S GOING ON. ?
I HOPE HE HASN'T PERMANENTLY LOST HIS MIND—
SAKI !
HEY! BRING A STRETCHER !
DANGER

OKAY. IT'S A DEAL...
I'LL HEAD OUT FOR AREA 88 THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW.
DON'T WORRY... I WAS ASSIGNED TO THAT SQUADRON A SHORT WHILE AGO. SO...
YES. I'M SURE!
DON'T WORRY, MR. FARINA. I'LL ELIMINATE HIM RIGHT AWAY.
A MAN NAMED SHIN? YES, I KNOW HIM WELL...
AFTERWARDS, WE'LL BE OUT OF COMMUNICATION FOR A WHILE.
SO, I'M OFF TO MY OLD STOMPING GROUND..
BACK TO AREA 88..

TO BE CONTINUED.